



Network

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INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS FREEMAN

Founder and CEO of VirtCom and founder of World Diversity Leadership Summit

Mr. Douglas C. Freeman is the founder and CEO of VirtCom, a strategy management consultancy group focused on solving and facilitating global diversity management issues. Mr. Freeman is also the founder of the inaugural World Diversity Leadership Summit, a conference of Global Chief Diversity Officers and Diversity Executives. Mr. Freeman's professional career has spanned from investment banking and strategy consulting, to business-to-business Internet Technology. Mr. Freeman has also served as a Senior Consultant for Deloitte Consulting and as an investment banker at JP Morgan Chase in the Restructuring Group. Currently, Mr. Freeman serves on the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Minority Enterprise Development Week Committee and is Chairman of the U.S. Friends of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra.



Born in Dallas, Texas, Mr. Freeman holds a Master's in Public Policy focused on International Trade and Finance from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Q: *What is your professional and educational background?*

A: I am a Global Diversity Management Consultant. I started out in the University of California of Berkley, where I completed my Bachelor of Arts and majored in Political Science. I then came to New York City where I worked for the investment banking group of Chase securities.

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I went to graduate school at the Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University, where I spent two years focusing on international trade and finance and some non-profit areas. I came back to New York and worked for Deloitte Consulting in their telecommunications and media group. In July 2000, I had the opportunity to start VirtCom Consulting in New York which is a global diversity management consultancy. I have been working with multinational clients to ensure that effective diversity management,

as well as gender equality practices, are spread throughout their organization, in their market place strategies and their supplier strategies.

Q: When and why did you become interested in diversity/diversity leadership? What are the new forms of challenges in diversity?

A: The diversity leadership component has been a part of my family. My father is a symphony conductor and he founded an organization called the Chicago

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Letter from the Focal Point for Women

In this issue of *Network*, we cover several positive and significant developments in the area of gender and empowerment of women. First, the General Assembly passed a historic resolution in September 2009 endorsing the creation of a new United Nations entity dealing with gender issues. The resolution represents a milestone in the quest both to elevate the level at which gender is represented in the United Nations system, and bring greater coherence to the treatment that gender and empowerment of women issues receive. Gender constituencies, therefore, look forward to further developments that, in effect, would realize their dream of a separate entity for gender issues, on par with all others in the UN system.

Second, the Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations (GERWUN) organized a meeting on 14 July 2009 for staff to speak about gender issues with the invited guest, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) Asha-Rose Migiros. The DSG engagingly heard and discussed the issues of concern to women in the rank and file of the Organization, and also thanked GERWUN for its advocacy and efforts for positive change for women staff. The event was very well attended and positively received by the DSG and staff alike—a highly encouraging and motivating outcome.

In line with our coverage of developments engendering hope, this issue also carries interesting summaries of Dr. Lynda Gratton's article "Learn to Glow", which inspires employees to initiate a positive work environment through one's energy, creativity and enthusiasm, and an article reflecting the value of work/life balance. An organizational culture that effectively promotes work and life balance is being repeatedly shown to increase retention rates of women and enhanced enthusiasm to achieve the organizational goals.

Finally, we are pleased to carry an interview with Mr. Douglas Freeman, a global diversity leader who sets an example for men to be advocates of both gender and diversity as key drivers of success of both organizations and communities. It is heartwarming to have genuine male allies in our quest to empower all people, including, of course, the world's women.

We trust this issue of *Network* will inspire each one of you, renewing the flame of hope and action, wherever it runs weak.

In solidarity,



Aparna Mehrotra

INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS FREEMAN *(continued from p. 2)*

Sinfonietta Orchestra which has been around for 21 years. It is a mid-sized orchestra which performs at a symphony centre in Chicago, and they have always had a commitment to diversity as a mission. This orchestra was described by Juilliard School to be the most diverse professional symphony orchestra in the United States in its research of 1,200 professional symphonies. My father has been a proponent of diversification of the workplace. I learned from my father's insights, and started to apply it more to policymaking and to multinational activities. That was probably the beginning of VirtCom, which has been around eight years now.

In the workplace and on a global scale, the challenges differ. They differ according to ethnic or immigrant group or what the disabilities are. There are about six major demographic groups that diversity is trying to access: women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, those of different sexual orientation, the aging workforce (which is now a group seeing a lot of discrimination, particularly in Europe and North America), the disabled workforce (which is undergoing a lot of discrimination), and the religious minorities (ensuring that they have access and they are not discriminated against in the workforce for their religious beliefs).

Challenges exist in North America on the integration of women and ethnic minorities in the workforce with an emerging focus on disabilities. In Europe, the challenges lie on gender, disabilities and immigration particularly with Muslim ethnic minorities. A challenge in Europe is the integration of the Roma (gypsies), a group facing exclusion on many levels. How do you manage them as they move from one country to another? They are not integrated into the educational system and they do not have levels of opportunity to participate in the society. Thus, this group is often fully segregated from the European societies. Roma is probably one of the biggest diversity issues that Europe is facing now. Other issues around the world are religious clashes and tribalism in Africa in the areas of management wherein one's tribe may dictate an individual's ability to get a job in a certain country environment. Each continent and environment usually has a unique set of challenges around these specific target groups.

Q: What are the goals of the World Diversity Leadership Summits which you have organized? What are the ways in which advocates of diversity

and gender help in building global movements for positive changes in the society?

A: The World Diversity Leadership Summit launched in Prague in 2004 was set around a basic question for policymakers, and non-governmental organizations and multinational companies. We wanted to determine if diversity is valid outside of just a local or domestic country environment. Thus, if you have business operations in the United Kingdom, and if you have operations in Latin America, do your tools which you use in the U.K. to manage diversity work anywhere else? This is a simple question with very complicated answers. We are still looking at this.

Another conference was held in Prague in March 2006 wherein we compared the diversity environment of the European Union to that of the United States.

In 2007, we had the global compact in the United Nations where we looked at issues of corporate social responsibility and diversity. And in 2008, we had the Global Diversity and Gender Equality Summit where we explored the strands of gender equality across all our diversity questions.

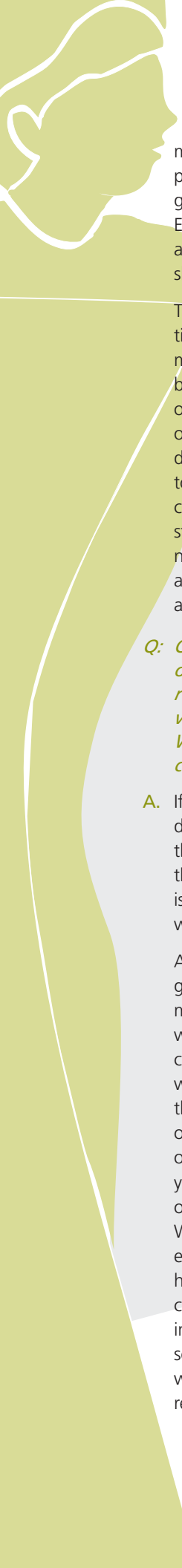
We have four to five principles which we try to abide by for all conferences.

First, we would like to have a top-notch gathering of experts and bring them together in one place at one time to share good practices and ideas.

We are driving to have global diversity management as a core vocation in education. We encourage business schools to teach diversity around the world. Also, more research needs to be carried out around diversity management.

And for corporations, diversity needs to be viewed by corporations as a core management competency which can impact their bottom line. The reason is that, while it has moral, ethical and legal components, when a corporation views diversity as a core competency, that can impact the bottom line. Consequently, diversity practices seem more firmly embedded in the organization.

Advocates in diversity and gender help to build global movements for positive changes in the society. I went to Budapest, Hungary, two weeks ago for a gender equality conference and award session. Everywhere, advocates have to partner and take advantage of many scarce resources—whether these resources are



money, time or people. They have to do a good job of partnering with like-minded advocates, with the right government officials and also with policymakers. The European Union is aligned with diversity management across Europe. This partnering on whatever activity should have a positive impact.

The gender equality group focused on the reintegration of women over 40. For example, in Hungary, many women are very skilled. But for many reasons, being outside of the workforce, there is no re-entry opportunity for these women. This is a good example of leveraging your relations and trying to impact in doing one area really well rather than being all things to all stakeholders. We try to work similarly in our conferences and approaches. If we can get a few key stakeholders aligned along with diversity, we don't need all government agencies. And with 10 or half a dozen stakeholders in multiple continents, you can accomplish a lot of changes very rapidly.

Q: One of the aspects of diversity is the issue of gender. Given your extensive experience regarding trends and challenges, how do you view the status of women around the world? What constitute the main challenges? What constitute the main solutions?

A. If you look at women in the workplace, there are different levels of women's empowerment around the globe. I think it starts with understanding where the society stands in terms of gender equality. This is based on levels of political participation, levels of workforce participation, etc.

After looking at the society's view of equality, we can go to more detailed levels of women's empowerment. Number one is the educational skills level, to what degree are women participating in the educational process. In some countries, due to poverty, women are pushed out of the educational system and thereby disempowered. Then, to what degree do the organizations attract and allow women to access real opportunity? It is great that you have skills but then if you are told that your only purpose is to raise children or to have more menial jobs, what is the purpose? We spend a lot of effort on this access component ensuring that even small businesses and companies have welcoming and inclusive environments and cultures for women in what are becoming new roles in countries around the world. Sometimes, due to societal issues, this is not the case, even if managers would like it to be. Managers might see the business reasons and the organizational reasons but the societal

biases and traditions prevent them from really doing the right thing when it comes to gender equality.

Then, once you have women in the organization or company, how are they treated? We know that even in western countries women are not given the same opportunities to excel. They are maybe brought in at a lower entry level, are not really provisioned for management level roles and nowhere near senior management. So they are held in limbo and frustrated, which might lead them ultimately to leave the organization.

Then, we can look at women's lifestyle changes. Do organizations have easy vehicles for women to leave and come back, when they need to? Can women easily integrate back from taking off to care for children or elderly? We call this off-ramps and on-ramps. This is a process of activities that needs focus.

Q. Do you think 50/50 balance between women and men is the best way to achieve gender equality?

A. It has been empirically proven that a key factor for optimal innovation and profit is balance between women and men, 50/50 or 60/40.

I think the key question to improve the balance is what we call a "competitive diverse pipeline". This means you consistently provide strong female candidates for each opportunity on all levels. If you make this part of your culture, then you're going to reach 50/50 a lot faster and with great talent.

But gender balance does probably not automatically lead to gender equality. I don't think representation or numbers really matter, I think it is the culture itself that has to be accepting of women and of minorities for that matter. There can be equality even when representation is not totally balanced; the numbers themselves are not the specific drivers. But given the fact that women represent 50 per cent of society, that should be the ultimate goal.

Q: How do you think an organization can best communicate the value of a gender diverse environment?

A: I think it starts at the top. You need to communicate the importance from management. Yes, there have to be policies and training, but leadership needs to convey the priority of gender equality consistently. Ultimately, if a leader is not aligned with these principles, or acts poorly around these issues, that person will have to leave. There have to be consequences for not being inclusive.

Q: How do you think we can get more men involved in the work for gender equality?

A: I think men have to understand that the future of all organizations is actually women. It is the future of the whole global workforce. Societies and companies cannot continue to grow at the current rate without looking at key sources of talent. The other thing is just the numbers. Because women have not participated to the same extent as men, there is a natural growth of educated and qualified women. It is just a fact. So if you are not taking this into consideration you are undermining the future of your company or organization. It just won't work. If you exclude half the population, you also exclude half the potential for innovation and talent.

Q: You said that there has to be a consequence when one is not accountable or not respecting diversity. Can you suggest some specific measures or examples of real consequences?

A: One, there are legal consequences. If your society has anti-discrimination laws which a lot of societies have, they tend to be equality bodies. In the U.S., it is called the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. And if there is a discrimination complaint, sometimes you have to take legal measures and sue or file a complaint against your employer, and that manager or set of managers who discriminated against you. So outside bodies can enforce anti-discrimination policies and that could lead to people being removed from organizations due to lawsuits because they discriminate against others.

Internally, it depends on your human resource policies and it depends on the strength of your leadership. So you hope that your leaders will not tolerate poor activities whether it is harassment-driven or anti-discriminatory. So you can talk to your leaders or HR group, talk to them to do their homework, and, if need be, have this person leave the organization. There are internal and external groups that any employee should be able to refer to discuss the poor behaviour of employers.

Q: As you mentioned earlier, diversity has a business objective, that companies which value diversity have a better return on investment. How would you measure the effect of diversity and inclusion in non-profit organizations or NGOs?

A: It is a little different but you could say that the principles are the same. For us, our corporation drives on productivity, efficiency, revenue and growth. So


we try to align diverse employees or suppliers or regulatory environments or business development investments with those four drivers, and we call those "blind spots" for organizations. They are often times ignored and we help them find those blind spots, put a value around them and actually realize that value. Often times, it involves diverse employees and diverse suppliers or people from diverse communities. So it's not just a business activity, it is a well-rounded set of activities that shows people in very tangible terms in their work environment that diversity will impact the bottom line. There are some early indicators around non-profit success. An example is the issue of funders with diversity values and the alignment if an organization is making good faith efforts to align its values and principles to a funder's values and principles around diversity. So in the U.S. environment, a lot of funders are adamant about non-profits having diverse workforces and even utilizing diverse suppliers in a way that is done in business. When that happens, certainly there is a clear linkage for non-profits to abide by that funder's diversity value set. That is not the case everywhere and for all funders. So for us, we are still exploring ways in which diversity can impact the real core mission for a lot of non-profits. How does it align with the mission of a non-profit? It can be a piece of exploration which would be an equivalent to a bottom line for a company. That is new.

Q: Do you think it could be the same for NGOs? Or if not, how could it be measured?

A: I think it will eventually. I think we just do not have enough case studies and empirical data. Relatively speaking, we have a lot of empirical data from research now and from case studies of big companies from IBM to Pepsi, Adecco, Visa, Major League Baseball, etc. These are all organizations that today have case studies of diversity's impact on their bottom line and later embedded an inclusive environment and workforce, improved the way that they have people include each other, in which we see its impacts on the bottom line and their inclusive cultures. But we do not have the scope and breadth of case study in the non-profit world that shows similar impacts. There are a lot of opportunities there.

Q: When you look at the future labour workforce, what do you think would be their challenges in terms of work/life balance?

A: That is a major issue. Women are often at a disadvantage, particularly single mothers or multi-responsibility/multi-children type families with a



woman who may have to work as well as manage the children. It means that the way in which decisions are made in the workforce will have to be changed because oftentimes decisions are made in informal environments, away from the workplace for example. So when a woman is picking up her child at school, some of the men may be at a dinner discussing the business of the day and making critical business decisions, really excluding the woman from that opportunity and that often is evident. We see that it's not just the hours in the day but it's also what goes around in informal men circles, that are really exclusive to women, that impacts how women perform or manage their work on a day-to-day basis. So those kinds of issues are hard to deal with but we see ways of getting around that by simply addressing them. When work/life balance issues are not being addressed, then problems occur.

Of course, the other issue is culture. We call it an "alpha male" culture, where questions like "How many hours can we take of your time? How much more work can you take on?" are relevant. There are a lot of work cultures unfortunately that value such excessive work activities, which is not conducive to work/life balance, particularly for women. So once again, we address those cultures, those that tend to have very masculine aggressive tendencies and really asking them some core questions, such as, "Is that necessary?" Investment bankers are known as an alpha male culture. Many corporations, even certain government organizations, are alpha male cultures in their way of determining how people are promoted, how people are viewed, whether it's in humour or in jest, a very masculine type of humour that is not appropriate for everyone. So the real issue is of understanding how your culture works in those ways and how that impacts any work/life balance strategy. It is complicated, but the magnet is: What is your culture? How is it negatively impacting work/life balance? What kind of steps can be taken to make the culture more flexible? Because work can be done anywhere, people do not even have to be in the office anymore. They do not have to be in the same continent or in the same office. So if all these organizations are working across time zones around the world, which is by definition flexible working, i.e. they live on a different time zones, how is it that everybody in the U.S. or Europe has to be in the same place in the same time and when 5 o'clock comes along. It is not acceptable for a woman to say, "I'll be doing a little bit more work later" but men can say, "Oh, we are taking time off" and it is a different standard. It is ridiculous.

Q: You have worked with many organizations in the field of diversity. Can you share some good practices that they have used in terms of work balance?

A: I think it certainly starts with your commitment to diversity and an inclusive workplace. When we build a diversity programme in a mid-sized or larger organization, some kind of institution has to be built. There needs to be some kind of professional manager responsible for overseeing gender equality and diversity practices on a day-to-day basis as a part of their core work activities. Not as something they do once a month, something that they do regularly, so it's usually embedded in their talents. Secondly, you want to see a diversity council. That is almost like a board of governors, usually senior managers or senior executives who are responsible for supporting the diversity strategy and ensuring that the rest of the organization knows the importance of that strategy. And then you would like to see employee network groups. Those are support groups of women or ethnic minorities or disabled who not only ensure that their group of individuals is connected to the organization, but they serve as diversity champions and almost advocates to ensure that the organizations spray inclusive practices. So institutionally, there are three tiers that create a platform for culture inclusion. In addition, there needs to be some level of training and educational awareness. People need to know what inclusive management tendencies are and what exploitative and really negative management approaches are. It's not all right to describe women in a certain way, it's not all right to use pejorative terms around ethnic minorities. But this has to be learned, you need to have some level of education. Those foundations are really the platform, the knowledge and education, communications of the importance of diversity, and those three institutions. That is your foundation for a culture of inclusion. And then your next step is you want to bring more people, you want to bring more women in. Now you have to find ways to recruit and attract women and hopefully you are recruiting them into an inclusive culture that you have put a foundation around and now they all actually participate, stay, be retained. And after including them in the culture, you can implement and support work/life balance changes because your culture will be inclusive and will be more accepting of this kind of activity. What we find to be one of the worst things is when some organizations just focus on recruiting women. Then the women will leave, and the organization will have a backlash. Some organizations

just force recruitment of ethnic minorities. It never works. You need to have an inclusive foundation that enables newer groups, employees from typically discriminated groups, to have an environment where they can succeed.

Q: *Can you share your personal philosophy?*

A: I think diversity and gender equality issues are core to society's success. I think they are core to organizational success. And I think it is core to personal success. I don't think everybody agrees with me but that is what I believe. And we start to see examples where society embraces diversity and it has a positive impact on the community as a whole. London and the Olympics for 2012, for example, where the positioning of their society in their Olympics as an inclusive measure helped them win the Olympics. They have placed their Olympic village in East London which is one of the poorest areas of London. New York, on the other hand, tried to do it in Manhattan. London's legacy objectives for the Olympics were inclusion, accessibility for the disabled and green sustainability. Those are the top three legacy objectives. Of course, with the inclusion of the four legacy objectives for society, there is an absolute major impact. So when you are looking at a society like Syracuse, New York, you see a city that is going to re-brand itself as an inclusive society, for the purpose of attracting new talented employees, new entrepreneurs, more women. That is the way to bring in innovation, diversity as an innovation to society. So to me, a commitment to inclusion on a personal level, organizational level and certainly community level has a major positive impact. But we don't quite yet know the positive impacts on society because we are not there yet. ■

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Ms. Bokova is also the Ambassador to France and its permanent delegate to UNESCO. She won the vote to serve as UNESCO head from the 58-member Executive Board, and her nomination will be submitted on 15 October to UNESCO's 193-member General Conference for formal approval.

AROUND THE UN ...

New Agency for Women

The 192-member General Assembly adopted resolution 63/311 on 14 September 2009 on system-wide coherence, creating a new agency for women. This constitutes a historic development, wherein a **single entity** will work for the development and promotion of women's rights with the purpose of achieving gender equality. The agency will be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, and is expected to merge the following four bodies currently on exclusively gender issues:

1. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM);
2. The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW);
3. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI); and
4. The UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW).

The General Assembly requested that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon provide the Member States with the specifics of the agency's mission statement, structure and budget, along with the composition of the executive board, which will oversee its activities. A coalition of approximately 300 non-governmental organizations worldwide supported of the adoption of the resolution and stated that the agency should be established without further delay.

Resolution 1888

Resolution 1888 was adopted by the Security Council on 30 September 2009, calling for immediate action to protect civilians—women and children—from all forms of sexual violence. It also calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to lead the effort against all forms of sexual violence in armed conflict and to assemble a group of experts who would immediately respond to the issue of sexual violence. ■

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins (Malaysia) who was appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as **Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support** on 17 August 2009. Ms. Cheng-Hopkins has served several United Nations organizations on humanitarian, post-conflict, peacebuilding and development issues. Equipped with management skills and outstanding leadership, all look forward to working with her to carry out the Secretary-General's peacekeeping agenda. Ms. Cheng-Hopkins replaces Ms. Jane Holl Lute.

Ms. Irina Bokova, a former foreign minister of Bulgaria, will be the first woman to head the United Nations

REMARKS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

to the Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations (GERWUN)

Tuesday, 14 July 2009, 1.15 p.m.

Dear Friends,

Let me thank the Vice-President of GERWUN, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, for her kind words of introduction. I also wish the GERWUN President, Ms. Mia Jose, a speedy recovery and I thank her for her active participation on this issue. It is a real pleasure for me to join you all today, and I am delighted to have this opportunity not only to speak with but also listen to this Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations. I am very much here today in listening mode to hear your concerns and thoughts. I am grateful that Ms. Mehrotra and Ms. Haji-Ahmed are also on hand in that regard and I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

For almost 40 years now, GERWUN members have been steadfast advocates for the promotion, within the United Nations, of mutual respect and understanding between women and men. Tackling gender inequalities in our Organization in areas such as recruitment, conditions of employment, assignments and training, GERWUN has been a constant champion of equal rights. Indeed, your work reminds management and staff alike of the standards and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and to which we have all signed up. I applaud you for your work and I thank each of you for your personal dedication to this cause.

It is fitting that I speak to you at a time when the General Assembly is debating the reform of the gender architecture of the United Nations. Our colleagues in the Division for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and UNIFEM have all been resolute in promoting women's rights and empowering women and girls throughout the globe, and I should add that this work is helping empower men on this issue.

There are, however, weaknesses in the present system's capacity to support action on gender, including the lack



DSG Asha-Rose Migiro

of a recognized driver and its fragmentation. Reforming this architecture would enable Member States to mobilize more fully women's creative and productive potential. I am hopeful that the progress made in the past months by Member States will enable them to muster the political will needed to agree, during the current session, to the creation of the proposed composite entity, and to fund it properly.

Yet, we cannot simply promote gender equality outside our walls if we do not implement it inside them. Indeed, it is a sad reality that a group such as yours is still needed as we continue to strive to ensure that gender equality is practiced and parity is achieved within our Organization. GERWUN's very existence shows that there is still some work to do.

The General Assembly mandated specific goals to achieve gender parity within the United Nations. In 1995, it called for 50/50 gender distribution at senior levels, and in 1996, it stipulated that this distribution was to be reached at all levels in the Professional category and above by 2000. Nine years past the deadline, the General Assembly still needs to reaffirm this 50/50 goal.

As you may know, there are multiple historic and legislative bases for the mandates to achieve gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet despite the Organization's commitment, progress has been slow. Some departments have made notable progress towards achieving gender parity. However, let us be honest that, overall, the numbers are gloomy.

I need not repeat for you the statistics, but I wish simply to highlight a couple. First, the percentage of women by level ranges from almost 51 per cent at the P-2 level (with a steady decrease to) 20 per cent at the USG level. Secondly, simple projections show that, based on data from 2007-

2008, we would not achieve gender balance at the P-4 level until 2024. This is disappointing, to say the least.

So, what are the causes of the slow progress within the United Nations? It is certainly not for want of trying or for lack of commitment at senior levels. As you may be aware, Secretaries-General and heads of Management and Personnel departments have made efforts to improve the situation. As a consequence of the Beijing Plan of Action, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women. Within the Secretariat, a system of special measures for the advancement of women staff was introduced, and departmental focal points were made ex officio members of appointment and promotion panels to ensure that qualified women candidates received full consideration. More recently, the terms of reference of the departmental focal points were updated and strengthened. And I am pleased to see that many of those focal points join us today, and I thank them for their contribution.

Also, a gender balance strategy has been jointly developed by OSAGI and OHRM to encompass measures that are simultaneously forward-looking and feasible to implement. This will soon be promulgated.

In conjunction, a gender scorecard has been designed to enhance and encourage both accountability and implementation of gender relevant policies and indicators such as the use of flexible work arrangements, the functioning of the focal point system per department, and the more traditional statistics per level and matters such as attrition. It is expected to be used to report twice yearly to the Management Committee, which I personally chair. I promise that I will be following up on this closely.

Finally, the Secretary-General has sought to improve the system for dealing with sexual harassment. He has shown zero tolerance for anyone who would engage in such acts and has issued a bulletin to all staff to improve our system of accountability in such cases. Due to efforts undertaken, there are thankfully fewer cases now than in the past. Earlier this month, our new internal justice system began its work in dealing with such matters. I hope that it will provide the level of fairness and accountability that is needed.


While I admit the need to solidify all of these tangible building blocks, I also recognize that much remains to be achieved. Clearly we are working against a complex set of factors that exist both within and outside of the United Nations.

We know, for instance, that women tend to be underrepresented in the more substantive fields such as political and peacekeeping, a fact often attributed to the stereotyping of women and their situations and capabilities. While this needs to be changed, we must remain optimistic and note that the Secretary-General is insisting on progress, and the issue is gaining momentum where it was lacking before. We must renew our commitment, overcome whatever fatigue may have set in, remind ourselves once again of our obligations, and reinforce anew our resolve.

Dear friends—the modern workplace is a testing and demanding environment. Combining a career with family life is difficult. I know that finding the right balance between professional advancement and motherhood, between work and life, is the toughest challenge we face, not least because we have to admit that we cannot achieve a perfect balance. However, this should not make any person feel guilty. One must recognize that attaining objectives has its “price”, so to speak! But this “price” has to be borne by females and males alike, in partnership for their common good.

My daughter was only two years old when I decided to go to Germany to pursue my Ph.D., which was part of the requirements to enter an academic career. As you can imagine, it was not easy to leave a small child behind. I am lucky to have a husband who was very supportive. However, you and I know that nothing compensates one emotionally for being far from one's family. As Minister, I also had to spend long periods of time away from home, which was another tremendous challenge. As a working mother, I know the difficulties. I have felt the despondency. I see the challenges. And that is why I care deeply about this issue. That is why I encourage us as an organization to embrace opportunities for change which come our way. The Capital Master Plan and the Pandemic Preparedness Exercise both provide fertile and economical grounds to encourage flexibility as a work method. Increased staff mobility will also provide complementary opportunities for new learning experiences.

Achieving gender equality is an integral part of the reform of our United Nations and will undoubtedly help build a staff that is mobile, multi-functional, flexible and accountable—one which lives up to the highest ethical standards. The United Nations must both be on the cutting edge of change and practice fully what we preach. Only then can we be the strong and the moral force we must be, which the world expects of us.



An effective gender balance strategy requires strong commitment and leadership from the top as well as information-sharing to ensure that managers and staff at all levels are made aware of the strategy and the actions expected from them. The Secretary-General is committed to ensuring this. All managers must get on board. All staff must play their role. Gender equality is about women and men and is absolutely imperative for achieving sustainable development in its entirety. This is the rationale for Millennium Development Goal number three. You cannot have full development without full empowerment and provision of equal opportunities for both women and men.

I can assure you of the Secretary-General's personal commitment, and mine, to achieving gender parity at all levels and in all categories of posts throughout the Organization. We, however, can only do this together with partners such as your group. I therefore urge you to strengthen your advocacy within the house, become agents of change yourselves and draw to our attention, through the appropriate channels, those situations which you think need addressing. Let not the silence of the majority overcome the noisy resistance of the minority, if and where it may exist.

Let us be neither silent nor inactive. GERWUN is neither, and for that I commend you. Thank you very much.



The Vice-President of GERWUN, **Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill**, opened the floor for questions. Ms. Migiro expressed her willingness to listen and to answer questions from the audience. Ms. Sandra Haji-Ahmed, Director of the Learning Development and Human Resources Services Division (Office of Human Resources Management), and Ms. Aparna Mehrotra, Focal Point for Women (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), assisted the Deputy Secretary-General during the question and answer period.

In addressing a question from the audience, Deputy Secretary-General **Asha-Rose Migiro** shed light on ways the Organization can address current obstacles to achieving gender balance within the United Nations.

She also highlighted some necessary frameworks that must be established in the Organization in order to reach gender parity. She stressed that because of the efforts of Ms. Aparna Mehrotra, the role of Focal Points had been given new breath. The terms of reference for the Focal Points had been strengthened. Ms. Migiro, chairperson of the Change Management Committee of the Secretary-General, mentioned that she is working with the Office of the Special Adviser for Gender Issues and the Office of Human Resources to look into possibilities to ensure the use of flexible working arrangements and work/life balance. She stressed that when implementing and trying to reach gender balance, issues and obstacles have to be viewed at holistically in order to reach concrete solutions. Obstacles remain in the forms of entrenched attitudes and widely differing perspectives on certain issues. In her opinion, it would be wise to take affirmative action. Gender balance, she stated, can be achieved by a combination of work/life balance, flexible work arrangements, affirmative action and accountability.

Ms. Haji-Ahmed agreed that we must work on attitudinal change. She recalled that when flexible work arrangement policies were first created, managers were told about their benefits to the Organization and to the staff at large. She stressed that it is not a right of an employee to use flexible work arrangements, but, rather, these arrangements should be seen as a win-win situation for both staff and the Organization. OHRM has used this argument effectively through conversation, dialogue and good planning, although other departments are not in favour of such arrangements. She suggested a renewed outreach so that the nature of flexible working policies can be better understood.

Ms. Haji-Ahmed also mentioned that, in terms of the hiring process, it is vital to attract a large pool of talent. The United Nations Galaxy system receives 500,000 applications each year. However, only one-third of the applicants are women. Ms. Haji-Ahmed called for wider support from management in recruitment and welcomed everyone's assistance in finding more talented women who wish to find careers in the Organization.

Ms. Aparna Mehrotra said that there were special measures for gender equality that were promulgated in 1999, but that these have not been incorporated into the new staff selection system. To achieve gender equality, she believes that the short list of candidates endorsed to

the Central Review Board for approval should include a statement saying that these staff members are qualified as against the vacancy the evaluation criteria. Once qualified against this criteria, they become equally eligible for selection, i.e. there is no ranking. If, therefore a gender imbalance exists in a given department, it should be mandated that a candidate of the sex of the minority gender be selected. This will largely favour women, who are generally not well represented in departments and within them in certain divisions.

Ms. Mehrotra commented that although the newly promulgated Terms of Reference are substantial, there are points that still need to be strengthened. For example, Focal Points have to participate actively on interview panels. Heads of departments overlook this point and, unfortunately, there are no higher-level leaders who can communicate this situation to the heads of departments. The Terms of Reference also state that the Focal Points are to participate in the interview panels where "feasible". Ms. Mehrotra explained that "feasible" is used so that Focal Points can have the discretion to participate or not in the interview panels according to their assessment of needs and local policies. All policies are, after all, local. Unfortunately, some managers are using where "feasible" as a loophole to exclude Focal Points from interview panels.

Ms. Mehrotra further discussed the difficulty of implementing the 2003 policies on flexible working arrangements. She requested that the participants forward individual cases to her so that the Office of the Focal Point for Women can more clearly document trends. She expressed the need to bring such cases about work/life to Ms. Migiro's attention. Ms. Mehrotra emphasized that "someone has to prevail" to overcome resistance effectively and insist on the implementation of a flexible work culture that includes flexible work arrangements. It has repeatedly been proven that such a culture yields high organizational awards, such as enhanced productivity, lower attrition and increased job satisfaction and morale.

One of the Focal Points for Women raised the issue about the gap between policy and practice. She wanted to know how best to remedy this situation under the new gender architecture. In response, the Deputy Secretary-General said that the challenge of implementing the gender architecture in practice requires the support of Member States.

The four groups of indicators that will be assessed consist of distribution of staff, staff selection and career progression/

retention, function of the Focal Point system, and use of flexible working arrangements. The data analysis will be done each year, and its results will be considered during development of the Human Resources Action Plan (HRAP) and reported to the General Assembly. She hopes that the 2010 compact will more solidly support gender balance and flexible work arrangements. Because the management committee manages this report, Ms. Migiro will play a key role in overseeing these issues.

Another Focal Point for Women said that the gap between policy and practice stems from attitude. She emphasized that there is a need also to determine the distribution of women in the department. It is not just a numbers game, she stated. She further mentioned that Focal Points like herself are unable to lead change on their own; a commitment from higher levels is needed. The gap between leaders of the organization and the lowest level must be bridged.

Participants asked about the issues pertaining to women under the new administration of the justice system and the proposed mobility programme, specifically the need for D-1 personnel to be assigned on a mission assignment for two years, one of which cannot be a family mission.

Ms. Haji-Ahmed explained that regardless of the instruments used, she has witnessed a positive trend due to greater transparency in gender indicators by department. Such transparency draws attention to where other departments stand. She suggested that Focal Points should use this renewed attention in their advocacy efforts. If we look at the numbers, we can change the distribution from the inside, but we must also increase women's participation by external recruitment. Some departments are beginning to join occupational networks, which allow room for men and women to move around the Organization and thereby develop their careers. In regard to the effect of the new mobility programme on women, Ms. Haji-Ahmed commented that management would like to see staff moving around the different parts of the United Nations instead of being stuck in New York or in field missions. Dual careers should be considered to determine what measures are required to facilitate workers with families.

In closing, the Vice-President of GERWUN expressed her gratitude to the Deputy Secretary-General for listening to the issues facing the staff members and for sharing her comments on realities that do not get translated to higher levels. She especially thanked Ms. Migiro for her commitment to gender equality issues. ■

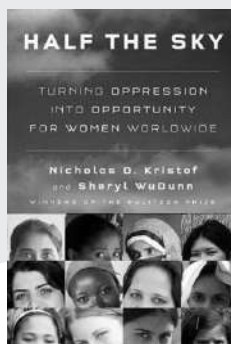
Survey of Focal Points for Women

In accordance with a decision of the Policy Committee, the Office of Focal Point for Women conducted an **electronic survey of Departmental Focal Points for Women** to gather information on the functioning of the Focal Point system within departments. The results are expected to feed into the gender balance scorecards and to be prepared and reported on twice a year to the Senior Management Committee, also in accordance with a decision of the Policy Committee. Fielding a response rate of 68 per cent, the results of the survey were discussed by the Departmental Focal Points at their September meeting. The key recommendations highlight two main themes for improving the functioning of the Focal Point system:

- The need for greater political will, commitment and support for the Focal Points on the part of leaders in the Organization; and
- The need for the focal point system to be more formalized to give it greater legitimacy and to allow Focal Points more time to fulfil their functions. ■

Half the Sky—Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

On 15 September 2009, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), in partnership with the United Nations Bookshop, presented a panel discussion followed by a book signing of *Half the Sky—Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, which was held in the Trusteeship Council chamber. Opening remarks were made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who emphasized the need for the international community to fight for women’s rights in order to end the brutality inflicted on women worldwide. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, mentioned that human trafficking in the form of modern slavery requires



prevention of crime, protection of victims and prosecution of traffickers. UNDOC has launched the “Blue Heart Campaign” against human trafficking to build global awareness of the issue by mobilizing governments that do not currently convict traffickers to obtain the necessary statistics concerning this abuse in order to stop the activity. Ms. Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof, both winning journalists and authors of *Half the Sky—Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, talked about their experiences with abused girls and women in developing countries like China and Cambodia. Their book is a way of inspiring people to help in the campaign against human trafficking, and to engage others in assisting with the development and empowerment of women in the world, the fight for their human rights, the provision of women’s education and the assurance of women’s reproductive health. ■

UNAMID

The African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) reactivated the women’s internally displaced persons camps (IDP) in the region of Sudan that had been shut down last year. In these centres, women will be educated with job skills and will attend awareness programmes on reproductive health and sexual/gender-based violence. They will also learn how to perform tailoring, candlemaking and handicraft activities, which will help them to sustain themselves economically. ■

Sexual harassment investigators

A two-day training session on sexual harassment investigations was held in the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) on 30 June and 1 July 2009 for **non-professional investigators who are in charge of investigating sexual harassment complaints**. Staff members from different offices in UNOG attended the two-day programme, which was facilitated by the Professional Practices Section of the Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). This effort is in accordance with sections 4.5 and 5.14 of the Secretary-General’s Bulletin 2008/5 on the prohibition of discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority in the workplace. Successful participants who completed the programme and passed the examinations are placed on a roster and will be called to investigate sexual harassment cases. ■

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)

The Globe and Mail news reported shockingly high incidences of rape in South Africa. Approximately 150 rapes are reported committed daily in South Africa; still others are not reported. Rapists usually bribe the victims' mothers with goats or cows so that the rape will not be reported to the authorities. It is reported that police authorities do not take reports of rape seriously. Further, they do not have any rape kits and thus lack the instruments and legal documents needed to investigate a rape case properly. Until recently, the **Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), an advocacy group of female activists on HIV/AIDS from Lusikisiki, South Africa, mobilized themselves to protect victims of rape.** In a notable case of an 18-year-old girl who was raped by a teenage boy, the TAC activists mobilized themselves, went to the neighborhood of the victim with loudspeakers and leaflets, and encouraged all the residents to report evidence of rape. In addition, because of the persistence of the TAC group, which appeared in the courtroom to provide support for the rape victim, the court convicted the rapist. After six years of mobilization against rape, the advocacy group has actively overcome the rape epidemic in Lusikisiki. It has likewise compelled the police to be more visible in preventing and protecting rape victims. ■

She asserts that she feels professionally satisfied being a police officer, an aspiration she had had since she was young. The first civil policewoman in the country received an award for her bravery in a shootout which occurred in one of the slum areas of Rio. Although female police officers are often discriminated against, they continue their missions courageously. They fight to clean up the streets of Rio from drugs, theft and crime. ■

IN YOUR INTEREST

“Learn to Glow”

Summary by Cynthia C. Gale

Dr. Lynda Gratton is a Professor of Management Practice at the London Business School and an outstanding authority on human resource strategy. One of her articles, “Learn to Glow”, discusses how individuals can prove their worth in the organization they work for during the current job recession and economic crisis. She says that “it is the survival of the brightest, and team members that can match earning potential with creativity will survive job cuts”. Dr. Gratton believes in radiating energy, innovation and success to create a cooperative environment. The challenge lies in the employee’s ability to accept the changes which come and to discover innovative new ways of working. Organizations need to promote teamwork and knowledge-sharing, while employees should develop their skills and find ways of cooperating with their colleagues. Individuals owe it to themselves and to their employers to create a work environment that is fulfilling for themselves and for their colleagues. This, according to Dr. Gratton, can be achieved by “**Glowing**”—creating a positive work environment that creates excitement and a great working experience, regardless of whether or not the organization we work for can provide it for us. *Gone are the days when being a valuable employee meant being the first one to arrive in the office and the last one to leave. Technology has changed all this. Dr. Gratton’s research reflects that to stay ahead of the work market, it is essential for a person to work with energy, creativity, inspiration, much enthusiasm and innovation.*

After years of research, Dr. Gratton specifies that people who Glow have expertise in three different aspects of their life:

- They have built deeply trusting and cooperative relationships with others (a cooperative mindset);

AROUND THE WORLD

Female police officers in Rio de Janeiro

A growing number of female police officers around Rio de Janeiro have been cracking down on drug traffickers. While in Brazil policing is a male-dominated profession, Brazilian women are gradually changing this. **Rio de Janeiro’s head of civil police states that 10 female officers were recently sworn into some of the highest posts in the organization, including the head of intelligence position.**¹ The new police chief of the anti-weapons and explosives unit is a 35-year-old woman, who also equally identifies herself also as a wife, housekeeper and a mother.

¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/28/rio-female-drugs-policing-brazil>.

- They have extended their networks beyond the obvious to encompass the unusual (jumping across worlds);
- They are on an inner quest that ignites their own energy and that of others (igniting latent energy).²

Dr. Gratton suggests that employees who want to Glow should seek advice from trusted colleagues. The wider network they have and the more open they are to new, fresh ideas, the more they will be innovative and energized. Seeking advice and asking questions creates energy and interest from others. It also develops insights that trigger the excitement of involvement from others. She conveys that it is essential to be proactive in making sure that the “where and with whom you work is conducive to you being able to Glow”.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Zimbabwe and maternal mortality

Maternal mortality and perinatal mortality have greatly increased in Zimbabwe. A recent study reports that HIV and AIDS are the main causes of death. The global HIV/AIDS news of IRIN on 8 July 2009 states that “**only 4.7 percent knew their HIV status, and only 1.8 percent of HIV-positive pregnant women received antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission**”. The second highest cause of death is excessive bleeding after child delivery. Women also suffer from hypertension and infection, which are additional causes of maternal death. These deaths frequently happen at home, because the women could not afford to travel to the distant health facilities or pay for medical help/medications. These facts are all based on the study of Ms. Hilary Chiguvare of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), together with the University of Zimbabwe and other UN agencies. Ms. Chiguvare indicates that Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Welfare initiated a programme to renew the “Mothers Waiting Homes”. The circumstances of maternal death in the country calls for the immediate implementation of an effective health system to prevent and treat maternal health complications.

Conflict in Pakistan

Hundreds of people have been displaced by recent conflict in Pakistan. Women and children have limited

² http://www.london.edu/newsandevents/news/2009/03/Learn_to_glow_956.html.

access to safe drinking water and are exposed to diseases and unsanitary conditions. **UNICEF extends its aid to children and women affected by the insurgency in conjunction with the Pakistani Government.** Mothers and their children have been tested for malnutrition. They also now receive safe drinking water and are being trained in hygiene. Through the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan, donors have contributed and pledged money to help the displaced women and children who are in need of ongoing assistance.

WORK/LIFE

Working women and motherhood

Tara Weiss, a staff writer for leadership, management and careers for Forbes.com, writes about **thoughts and suggestions for working women who are preparing to be mothers** in an article entitled “Here comes my baby”. She gave birth the day after this article was published. In the article, she reflects on motherhood and her job and asks her friends to share their thoughts on balancing motherhood with their careers.

Tara, having realized the dream of working as a reporter in Manhattan, has been reporting professionally for 11 years. She recently developed a new goal—to raise a happy child while working and ensuring that her husband is well taken care of. A co-author of an advice book for new mothers advised her, “Try not to feel guilty”.³ Tara received the same feedback from other working moms she has turned to for guidance. She feels that it is actually easier said than done. A criminal defence attorney told her to take one step at a time, as leaders do.

Another working mother took 12 weeks off for her maternity leave. She never imagined how much she would miss her baby when she went back to work. Thus, she encourages working moms like her not to make any impulsive decisions when first returning to work (like quitting their job). It takes time to adjust to being a working mother. Likewise, she finds relief in discussing and connecting with other working moms. Networking and finding support from others with similar situations greatly eases the burden during the

³ http://www.forbes.com/2009/07/29/working-mother-advice-leadership-careers-basics_print.html.

adjustment period back to work. In addition, she notes that it is helpful to arrange for childcare help even before the baby is born. Having a childcare plan makes it easier to lessen anxiety about returning to work.

A career coach mentions that the best aspect of going back to work is being able to concentrate on something without any interruption, which made her feel creatively fulfilled. She added that when going back to the office, one must always be reminded of the reasons for working—whether that be to use the intellect, to socialize or to help with the family's finances.

A legal consultant in her second year of a two-year clerkship with a federal judge in New York became pregnant with her first son. The situation agitated her because taking maternity leave would greatly inconvenience the other clerk, since her workload would increase. To resolve the issue, she organized all the work that needed to be accomplished in advance of her maternity leave. Such proactive measures promote a positive relationship with one's co-workers, which is particularly helpful when a mother returns to work. During her next pregnancy, she was in the middle of looking for a job and decided to work part-time. She suggests explaining to a potential employer the financial advantages of engaging a part-time worker, rather than stating upfront that you need the part-time job in anticipation of caring for your child when it is born. She emphasized the value of making time for oneself and to refresh oneself "independent of work and family". Furthermore, she believed in sharing the duties and responsibilities with one's spouse. "Let go of the fact that he might not do everything the way you would. Don't be a martyr."⁴

In closing, Ms. Weiss stresses what one of her friends told her, "Your priorities change ... You just have to strike the balance of what's right for you. And through it all you learn in a new way how much you can love someone".⁵

Gen Y and Baby Boomers

During the current economic recession, employers are mostly focused on cutting costs rather than on capturing the needed pool of talent for their organizations. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Laura Sherbin and Karen Sumberg indicate that as the economy recovers, companies will once again

try to recruit highly capable individuals who can deliver the best for their respective organizations in their article "How Gen Y and Boomers will reshape your agenda" (*Harvard Business Review*, July-August 2009). The article describes the characteristics of Baby Boomers and Gen Ys and reveals how their values could influence the decision-making of organizations.


Results of two large-scale surveys of college graduates show that Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) and Gen Ys (those born between 1979 and 1994) share distinctly similar work goals, attitudes and work behaviours. These two groups are twice the size of the Gen X group (those born between 1965 and 1978). Baby Boomers and Gen Ys seek to work together and with each other, with Gen Ys looking for professional advice from Baby Boomers, and with Baby Boomers enjoying working with Gen Ys, who share their technical skills with them. The high number of Baby Boomers and Gen Ys compared to Gen Xs reflects the implications for employers to shape a work environment that attracts and maintains the talent of both groups. Companies who then enhance a work environment with values shared by Boomers and Gen Ys will be able to capture and benefit from their talents.

The following are the common denominators between Baby Boomers and the Gen Y group. Both share the following attitudes, activities and values:

- Explore passions and hobbies;
- Want opportunities to break from work, mainly for personal fulfillment like community volunteering and improving the environment, culture and education, and contributing to society and the health of the planet. These "perk" them up so they can be more dedicated to their work and perform better;
- Believe in the benefits of flexible work arrangements, work/life balance and telecommuting;
- Love teamwork;
- Desire to give back to the community through their work;
- Affirm that a financial package is not the right reason to stay with an employer but instead regard that a great team, a challenging assignment, a range of new experiences, a definitive performance evaluation and recognition motivate and inspire them to continue their work with an organization.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*



Taking into account these positive attitudes and values directed towards non-financial rewards in the workplace, companies can therefore re-design their overall goals and initiatives in terms of managing their human resources and retaining high-quality talent. ■

RECOMMENDED READING AND WEBSITES

***Half the Sky*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn**

During the authors' travels to developing countries, they both discovered that the deep problems they were exposed to are related to the oppression and abuse of women. These problems include sex slavery and forced prostitution, honour killings and rape as a weapon of war, and maternal mortality. Through the stories related in the book, the authors emphasize that investing in women is the solution to issues like poverty, over-population and violence. The authors also share the stories of people and organizations that advocate the economic and social development of women and

girls. The writers hope that the message of the book will bring increased awareness of the global struggle for women's rights. They also aim to empower women and to improve women's health.

**[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/
climate_change](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change)**

WomenWatch, the UN portal on gender equality and women's empowerment, launched this online feature to inform readers about the UN's comprehensive work on gender equality and climate change.

<http://www.undispatch.com/>

This website covers information and perspectives on both UN and UN-related issues concerning climate change, health, human rights, women and world issues.

<http://www.unodc.org/blueheart>

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime website on its international campaign to fight human trafficking brings awareness on the objectives of the campaign, and how individuals can provide support to fight this crime against human dignity.

INFO

You can find a monthly list of senior vacancy announcements (P-5 and above) at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/>

You can read *Network* online at
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/Network>

To receive hard copies of *Network*, please send an e-mail request to **network-newsletter@un.org**

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